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God in the storm

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GOD IN THE STORM:

A NARRATIVE

BY THE

REV. L. P. W. BALCH.

AN ADDRESS,

BY

REV. LYMAN BEECHER, D. D.

AND

A SERMON,

BY THE

REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D D.

PREPARED ON BOARD THE GREAT WESTERN, AFTER THE STORM ENCOUNTERED ON HER RECENT VOYAGE.

NEW-YORK:
ROBERT CARTER, 58 CANAL STREET.
PITTSBURG: 56 MARKET STREET.
1847.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE nature and design of the following work will be apparent from its contents. It is a pillar of remembrance, a memento of danger and deliverance, and a testimonial of gratitude. It shows how God brings light out of darkness and good out of evil, to them that seek Him. The occasion gave rise to its contents, which were all written on board the vessel, for the purposes referred to in each, and given without modification or adaptation to the rules of refined taste or of caustic criticism. To our fellow-voyagers those "memorials of the sea" will be grateful; and to all who delight to trace God's footsteps, even the repeated delineations of the storm, given in each of the publications, will be interesting as exhibiting in different lights one of God's most wonderful works.

NARRATIVE.

SATURDAY, September 18th, 1846.

The steamship Great Western, B. R. Mathews, Esq., Commander, left Liverpool at 4 o'clock, P. M., having on board one hundred and twenty-six passengers, Captain, five officers, five engineers and seventy-four crew, in all two hundred and eleven persons.

The weather, generally, was pleasant for the season of the year, and our progress good, averaging 200 miles a day.

"Saturday, Sept. 19th, lat. 48 34, long. 37 43, at 4 P. M., light airs from the S. E. and foggy, with light drizzling rain. Got the yards aloft, and set the jibs and fore spencer. Breezes refreshing. At 6 set the single-reefed main spencer and the square sails, with two reefs in the topsail.

" At 8 P. M., the wind increasing and variable to the westward, took in the square sails, outer jib and main spencer. At 10 P. M., freshening gales and ugly weather; sea getting up and tossing high. At midnight, increasing gales and heavy squalls; took in the fore spencer, the outhall having broken; in the mean time, the inner jib-stay bull's eye hook broke and the sail became useless; hauled it down and set the fore stay-sail."

The above is an extract from the captain's log book, and gives an account of the commencement of the awful storm which the Great Western surmounted on her passage from Liverpool to New-York; one so terrific during its continuance, and marked by such a signal deliverance in the end, that it should be carefully related.

" Sunday, 20th, at 40 minutes past 2 A.M.," continues the log, " split the fore stay-sail; took in the remains of it, and lay to under bare poles.

" The sea rising frightfully, and breaking over and against the ship. At 4, the wind increased to a heavy storm, and the sea running most furiously at the ship. The wind veering to the N. W. at the same time, and the ship breaking off into the

trough of the sea, rendered our situation more critical. A great quantity of water got into the engine room, from the sea breaking over the ship, which was pumped out by the lee bilge pump."

Sunday morning most of the passengers assembled in the cabin and saloon. Their haggard faces told too surely of the sleepless and anxious night which they had passed. Even those most ignorant of nautical affairs could not fail to discover that we were in the midst of great peril. Few could dress with their accustomed care, owing to the violent pitching and constant rolling of the vessel. The stewards abandoned any attempt to prepare the breakfast table, and both then, and throughout the day, were obliged to content themselves with bringing such articles of food as were most convenient, to those who felt any disposition to eat.

" 11 o'clock, A. M.—A heavy sea broke over the fore-part of the starboard wheel house, or paddle box, which started the ice house, and large iron life boat, from their fastenings, and washed them to

lee-ward, and with much difficulty they were temporarily secured."

To understand this, the reader must bear in mind that the Great Western is, so to speak, three stories high forward and aft; and two in the waist, or middle of the ship: aft, there is the lower story or cabin; above it, the saloon, the roof or covering of which is the quarter deck, and may, for the purposes of description, be considered as a third story. In the waist, or middle, the lower story is occupied by the engine room, the roof or covering of which is the main deck. On this main deck, in the centre, are placed the chimney, galleys, and ice house. The various offices appertaining to the stewards and police of the ship, at the sides. This part is open above; and protected by the wheel-houses and sides of the ship, which rise to the height of fourteen feet. The width of the paddle box is about twelve feet. The ice house contained some seven or eight tons

of ice, and was fastened by cleets and stauncheons. Let the reader imagine the force of the sea, and the height of the waves, which, rising over the paddle box, struck the ice house and the large iron life boat above it, twisted them from their fastenings, breaking the ice house into two parts, ripping off the planks, crushing the starboard companion way, and only prevented from making a clear breach in the sides of the ship, by a sudden lurch to port. Meantime the wind howled most frightfully through the rigging.

" At 11 o'clock and 15 minutes A. M., attempted to wear ship, to get her on the other tack, (thinking she would be easier,) as the wind still continued to veer to northward. Lowered the after gaffs down; manned the fore rigging, and loosened the weather yard arm of the foresail, to pay her off, but found it had no effect. Therefore let her come to again. In the mean time the square sails blew away from the yards.

" 11, 30, A. M. The lee quarter boats were torn from the davits by a heavy lee lurch of the ship,

bending the davits, tearing out the ringbolts from their stems and sterns."

Word was passed among the passengers that two of our boats were gone, and the others were likely to follow, the davits and bolts beginning to give. But not a remark was made; each spoke to the other only through the eye. And the ominous silence which pervaded the whole company, told how sensibly all felt themselves in the very presence of the King of Terrors, uncertain of their doom.

It was wonderful to see how a few short hours changed the condition and feelings of all on board. The grades and distinctions incident to so large a company, varying in social position, citizens of almost all countries, and professing different creeds, yet, in the presence of so imminent danger, all distinctions seemed merged into one common emotion of awe, as we stood together in the court of the great leveller, Death.

With this intense feeling, which bound us together as one, came also another of an opposite and repelling character. Every heart was deeply occupied with its individual griefs and memories, as if not another shared the peril. Home, with its loved ones, and a thousand cherished hopes and joys, rose fresh to the view, and with a power like the storm, swept over the mind and left it, like the ocean-tempest, tost and troubled.

"See," said a gentleman to me, "no one converses, no one reads—all are engaged, each with his own thoughts; and if my wife and children were here, I confess, my feelings would be of the most distressing character." "But," said I, they suffer in your loss." "Very true; yet it is only a question of time, and, whether sooner or later, God's will be done."

"At noon, storm and sea raging in all its fury, sea still breaking over the ship, a heavy sea struck

the larboard paddle box and smashed it to atoms; sprung the spring beam, breaking the under half; shattered the parts of the ship attached thereto. A splinter struck the captain on the head while standing on the poop, and the force of the blow, together with the sea, carried him over the lee quarter, and he was only saved by the nettings.

"After this sea had passed over, we found the water had gained on the pumps; the wind appeared to lull a little and the ship a little easier, but still blowing a storm. All the hatches, except those made use of for passing into the engine room, were battened down, and the skylights partially covered. The weather continued the same until midnight, at which time it lulled for half an hour."

The log conveys to the reader some idea of the state of the ship and effects of the storm on Sunday at noon. Its effects on those below can best be given in the words of a gentleman who remained the greater part of the time in the cabin:

"To convey an idea of the appearance of all around, is out of my power. In the words of Sheridan, 'the tempest roamed in all the terror of its glory.' The atmosphere was surcharged with a

thick spray, rendering a look far out to seaward, impossible. The wind howled, roared and bellowed, like the constant mutterings of the thunder-cloud. Huge waves, of tremendous height and volume, rose in mad display around the ship, threatening every moment to break over us amidships, and crush the vessel. Sea after sea striking us with terrific noise, caused the gallant ship to stop for an instant, tremble and shake in every timber, from her stem to her stern-post; reeling and lurching, tossed to and fro, again would she gather fresh strength, and with her wheels half hid in the wild waters, again and again receive the thundering blows of an element that seemed armed for our destruction.

The sails on the yards, strongly secured by ropes and gaskets, were blown from their furls and streamed out to leeward in ribbons. But all this was as nothing. About 1 P. M., whilst most of us were seated in agonizing suspense in the lower cabin, holding fast to the tables and settees, a sea struck the vessel, and a tremendous crash was heard on deck; instantly the cabin was darkened, and torrents of water came pouring down upon us through the skylights.

"Scarcely had the waters reached the floor, when all in the cabins and state rooms sprang to their feet, and simultaneously, as if by concert, the ladies uttered a scream of agony, so painful, so

fearful, and so despairing, the sound of it will never be forgotten : and heaven grant that such a wail of anguish may never again be heard by me. Several fainted—others clasped their hands in mute despair, whilst many called aloud upon their Creator."

The crash to which the writer alludes was caused by the tearing up of the benches and other wood work on the quarter-deck. These were hurled with violence against the sky-lights, by the same sea which broke the windows of the saloon, drenching the berths on the larboard side, driving out their affrighted occupants, whilst it smashed by its weight the glass over the main cabin, and thus forced its way below.

This was a period of intense emotion. I was sitting in the upper saloon, striving to protect some ladies from injury. So violent were the shocks of the vessel, although firmly braced, it was with great difficulty we could prevent ourselves being hurled from our seats, and dashed with such violence against a part

of the vessel, as to endanger life or limb. Many received severe contusions and bruises, notwithstanding all their efforts.

'Twas an anxious hour. My eye wandered over the different groups in the saloon. Resting one while on a Father passing from one to another of his family, and cheering with a kind word an interesting group of daughters. Then on a young wife, folded to the bosom of her husband without a syllable being uttered, but the action spoke volumes; and again upon a mother whose children had been left in America, as she clasped her hands as if in secret prayer, whilst her husband and her father gathered around, and all seemed bowed down to earth in one common feeling of tender solicitude for those who might so soon become helpless orphans.

It was an awful hour. The most thoughtless amongst us cowered in their secret hearts before a danger, which none but a fool or a brute would have

mocked, and all therefore accepted the invitation to meet in the cabin for prayer.

Rev. Mr. Marsh read the 107th Psalm. Rev. Dr. Smucker prayed. Rev. Dr. Beecher made a few solemn remarks. Rev. Dr. Balch repeated the words of Our Saviour, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me,"—commenting briefly on their consoling import, and then invited all present to join with him in the Lord's prayer; after which he pronounced the Apostolic benediction.

Night approached. And again I quote from the gentleman who has kindly given an account of what took place below.

"Amid this accumulation of horrors, and still more to add to our alarm, night gathered in around us. The wind, far from abating, was on the increase, the lulls in the storm being less frequent, and the squalls, if any thing, more terrific. The whole ocean was one sea of foam, lashed up into terrible waves, wild and angry, whilst the spray and wind seemed driven through the rigging and over the

ship, as if with demoniacal power. As darkness came, clustered together in the cabin, we all thought and reflected on our fate. Most, if not all of us, had given ourselves up for lost. For what with the heavy labouring of the ship, the terrible noise and howling of the wind, the continued frequent thumpings of the sea, the quivering and shaking of the groaning timbers, the carrying away of so many portions of the vessel's upper works, and the knowledge that we were perhaps for another night to be exposed to the full power of a raging hurricane, left us little to hope for."

In the evening, about 9 o'clock, the Rev. Mr. Balch, at the request of several passengers, administered the Holy Communion in the cabin, to upwards of sixty persons—many of whom received it there, for the first time in their lives. Several applied to him as to the propriety of their embracing that occasion to fulfil a long-cherished purpose of their hearts, but which, like many other "good thoughts," had been deferred to "a more convenient season." They all communicated, together with others of almost every creed and nation, thus reminding us of the promise of Scripture, "they shall come from the East and the West, the North and the South, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of God."

It was a most solemn scene. Mr.

Balch first read the service appointed for a storm at sea, after which, the whole communion office. The terrible conflict of the elements which raged without, was rendered yet more striking by the impressive stillness which pervaded that company of Christ's disciples within.

Gathered around the table, they received into hearts deeply moved, the consecrated emblems of the Redeemer's body and blood. All felt comforted by the blessed ordinance of grace. Many a bosom, before tossed with fear, was now tranquil through faith. Once more, all renewed their vows, and realized the peace of God shed abroad in their hearts, and felt, with a vividness perhaps never before known, "Your life is hid with God in Christ." Oh! it was a night and a communion long to be remembered.

After the communion, I returned to my state room. The gentleman who shared it with me, had gone below to

die, as he expected, in company with his daughter and son-in-law. Left therefore alone, taking a last look at the pictures of my little family, and commending them, and all dear to me, to the grace and protection of God, I laid down and slept peacefully.

"Monday, 21st, 12 30, continues the log, the storm commenced raging again in all its fury, and the sea a perfect foam, 'till 8 A. M., at which time the clouds began to break, and the squalls less furious. Got the ship's head to the N. W., and hauled the yards round, the sea still raging as before, and nearly ahead, curling and breaking over the ship in every direction. At noon the storm ceased; but the sea continued more violent till 2 P. M., at which time it ceased gradually with the wind—having lasted about 36 hours; during which time, it gives me much pleasure to state, my officers and crew conducted themselves with great coolness and presence of mind."

At half-past 5 o'clock on Monday morning, we were in the greatest possible danger.

Mr. Stevens, one of our passengers who was an eye witness, says of it—

" A peculiar lifting of the haze in the east, with an appearance of an amber-coloured belt of light, low down on the horizon, warned us of an approaching blow. Presently it came, a perfect tornado, driving before it the clouds of spray, and as it neared us, fairly lifting up the white foam from the waves, like a shower of rain. As the squall struck us, the ship careened over and buried her gunwales in the ocean, and lay for a few moments stricken powerless, and apparently at the mercy of the savage waves that threatened to engulf us.—This was the trial, the last round fought between the elements and our gallant vessel. At this critical moment, the engine was true to her duty. Still went on its revolutions, and round and round thundered her iron water wings. Gradually recovering her upright position, the good ship, with head quartering the sea, came up to her course, and all was well. It was the climax of the storm, the last great effort of the whirlwind king, to send us to the sea-giants' cave below."

On Monday about 12, the storm had abated sufficient to admit of standing on the upper step of the companion-way with safety. It was a sublime, but an awful spectacle. The ocean still laboured under the effects of the hurricane. The

wind veered 20 points in 36 hours; it is impossible to imagine or describe the wild and tangled confusion of the waves. Rising to a height apparently greater than that of the mainmast, they leaped and roared around the ship, as if hungry and maddened at the loss of their prey. At times the Great Western seemed as if lowered by unseen spirits into her watery grave; and every moment you expected it to be filled in, and her requiem sung by the winds amidst the wilderness of waters.

But our danger was past, and with grateful hearts, on Tuesday morning, all assembled in the cabin to render an act of common prayer and thanksgiving.

Rev. Dr. Smucker read a psalm and made some appropriate introductory remarks; and Rev. Dr. Beecher addressed the passengers at length and with much force on the mercy we had experienced, and prayer was offered.

After the religious services were end-

ed, Archibald Gracie, Esq., of New York, was called to the chair, and the Rev. Mr. Marsh appointed secretary. On motion, it was

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to draft a resolution expressive of our gratitude to Almighty God for his great goodness in our almost miraculous deliverance from destruction; and also to the captain, officers and crew of the ship, for their arduous labours, and their skill, firmness, and perseverance, in carrying the ship through her late perilous condition.

The same committee were charged with the duty of reporting a suitable memorial of our gratitude to the captain, officers and crew.

The Chairman, Secretary, Rev. Dr. Beecher of Cincinnati, Rev. Mr. Balch, Dr. Washington and Dr. Detmold of N. Y., Mr. Hutchinson of Geo., Mr. F. Mather of Geneva, and Mr. Rawlings of England, constituted said committee.

The Rev. Mr. Balch, at the request of the committee, stated at a subsequent meeting of the passengers, the conclusions at which the committee had arriv-

ed, when subsequently it was resolved, that two subscription papers be opened, one for the purpose of giving a suitable testimonial to the captain, officers and crew, the other to form the nucleus of a fund for the relief of the families of those whose heads and supporters have been lost at sea, and to be called "The Great Western Fund." Said money in the mean time to be deposited in the hands of James Boorman, Pelatia Perritt, Rev. Lewis P. W. Balch, James Lenox, and Robert B. Minturn, of New York, as Trustees.

In pursuance of the above resolution, Mr. Gracie addressed the following letter to Captain Mathews:—

At Sea, on Board of Steam-ship,
Great Western, Sept. 28th, 1846.

Capt. Mathews:

Sir,—As Chairman of the Committee appointed by the Passengers on board of this ship, I have now the pleasure of informing you, that the sum of £200 10s. have been subscribed by them, to be presented to the "Captain, officers and crew of the

Great Western," as a token of the estimation which is entertained of their valuable services during the late perilous scenes through which we have passed. To those services, as well as to the great strength and other admirable qualities of your noble ship, we are (under Providence) indebted for the preservation of our lives.

To yourself in particular (without overlooking the meed of praise due to others) we would express our feelings of admiration of the coolness and skill displayed by you during the trying period of peril when, while endeavouring to prevent alarm among us, you did not, when called on, withhold from us your sense of the danger to which we were exposed.

Of the above subscription, in behalf of the passengers, I ask your acceptance of the sum of £80, now presented to you by the Treasurer, in the beautiful purse which has been worked for the occasion by one of our fair passengers; and to distribute the remainder, which is contained in another beautiful purse presented by one of our fair passengers, among the officers and crew under your command, agreeably to the schedule which accompanies it.

At the same time it gives me pleasure to inform you, that a liberal contribution has been made, with the view of creating a fund for the relief of families whose heads and supporters have been lost at sea; and that in compliment to yourself and this ship, as

well as in commemoration of the signal mercy we have experienced in her, it is to be called the "Great Western Fund."

With sincere wishes for your continued health and prosperity, I remain, with great regard,

Respectfully yours,

ARCHIBALD GRACIE.

Chairman.

To this letter Captain Mathews returned the following answer:

GREAT WESTERN S. S., at Sea,
Sept. 28th, 1846.

To A. GRACIE, Chairman, &c.

Sir: Your letter to me in behalf of the passengers by the Great Western steamship, under my command, I feel as a very great compliment to my ship, officers and self; and in reply, I beg to tender most gratefully our best thanks and warmest regards.

It is to Divine Providence alone that we are all indebted for our safety. For during my long experience at sea, I never witnessed so severe a storm, and were it not for the good qualities of my noble ship, under the direction of God, she could not have weathered it.

I am more than pleased at the step your Committee have taken to promote the interest of the widows and orphans of seamen and others lost at

sea. And I am sure that the Directors of the Great Western S. S. Co., with myself, and all interested in this ship, will consider it a high compliment which you have conferred upon her. And I for one, will contribute my mite to this glorious undertaking, and I have no doubt but my officers and crew will follow my example.

I have the honour to be,
Sir, your ob't serv't,
BARNARD R. MATHEWS.

Mr. Gracie also handed to Mr. Balch, as one of the Trustees of the Great Western Fund, the following letter:

On board the Steamship Great Western,
Sept. 29th, 1846.

Gentlemen—I have been directed to inform you, by the Committee appointed by those passengers on board of the Great Western, who have made a contribution for the purpose of forming the nucleus of a fund "for the relief of the families whose heads and supporters have been lost at sea, and which, in compliment to the Captain and ship, as well as in commemoration of the signal mercy we have experienced in her, is to be called the "Great Western Fund"—that they have unanimously named you Trustees of said Fund.

The subscription now amounts to $580—which sum will be handed over to you by the Treasurer,

Robert Hutchison, Esq., to be invested in such manner as you may deem best, in order that the interest accruing from this and subsequent subscriptions, may be applied to the object proposed.

We doubt not you will lend your valuable co-operation to the furtherance of this noble charity, which deserves, as doubtless it will receive, the cordial support of the community at large.

I have the honour, gentlemen, to remain,
Your obedient servant,
ARCHIBALD GRACIE.

To Messrs. James Boorman, Pelatiah Perrit, Rev. Lewis P. W. Balch, James Lenox and Robert B. Minturn.

The following resolution, expressive of our gratitude to Almighty God, and of regard for the Captain, officers and crew, was subsequently adopted.

At a meeting of the passengers held on board the Great Western, Sept. 29th, 1846, and unanimously adopted,—

Resolved, In review of the perils of the late gale, which threatened the termination of our earthly plans, and endeared social relations for the allotments of eternity, and of our deliverance with the cheering prospect of restoration to our families

and friends, we desire with grateful hearts to render to God the homage of our devout thanksgiving; with our supplications that He will sanctify to us the admonitions of His providence, and render them subservient to our present and future well-being. We would also render praise to Him for the calmness and decision and endurance granted the captain, officers and seamen of the ship, through the whole period of the protracted storm; and for the solemnity, and equanimity, and good conduct which, amidst such protracted and appalling dangers, characterized the passengers and inmates of the ship.

So closes the record of this memorable storm. But never can its recollection be effaced from the minds of those who were exposed to its perils.

When the danger had all passed, said the Captain to me, "Thrice on deck I thought destruction inevitable. Each time a sea of such magnitude and power came at the ship, that I thought it was all over with us. But unexpectedly each broke just at the side of the ship. Sir, the hand of the Lord was in it." Yes, the hand of the Lord was in it—may

we never forget 'twas the hand of the Lord.

The above narrative, correspondence, letters and resolutions having been submitted by the Committee and unanimously authenticated at a public meeting of the passengers, held on board the Great Western, Sept. 29th, 1846, the meeting directed that the whole should be published in the papers of New-York and Liverpool, and a copy forwarded to the Directors of the Great Western Steamship Company. The meeting then adjourned, sine die.

ARCH. GRACIE, Chairman.
LYMAN BEECHER,
LEWIS P. W. BALCH,
JOHN MARSH,
JAS. A. WASHINGTON,
W. DETMOLD, M. D:
A. HUTCHISON,
THOMAS RAWLINGS,
JS. MATHIEU.

DR. BEECHER'S

ADDRESS TO THE MEETING

CONVENED ON BOARD

THE GREAT WESTERN,

SEPTEMBER 22, 1846,

To offer Thanksgivings to God for their Preservation through the recent protracted Storm.

I have never before been called to speak in circumstances like these. A few days since, we stood here before God, to supplicate deliverance from a threatened speedy death. I have before supposed myself not far from the grave, but it was at home, surrounded by my family and friends, and whatever could cheer the dying hour. But never, till

recently, did I realise, that probably there might be but a step between me and death; and in full health, amid the war of elements, await in suspense the stroke which at any moment might fall upon us all. But the storm is past, and we are all alive, to praise him who heard our supplications and preserved us. And what direction of our thoughts can be more proper, than a brief review of the perils we have passed through? The evidence of the Divine interposition in answer to prayer to save us, and the returns which it becomes us to make for our signal and merciful preservation.

In respect to our dangers, I need not say to *you* who passed through them, that they were great.

For thirty-six hours the wind raved and the waves rolled with a fury and power unknown, for so long a time, to the most experienced navigators on board. Travelling mountains, with the power of the Iceberg, the Avalanche or

the Niagara, for one day and two nights, as far as eye could reach, covered the surface of the deep; thundering loud and unceasingly around us. The onset commenced on Saturday night, and raged increasingly till Sabbath morning, when, instead of mitigation, it gathered new power, and then commenced the work of desolation.

The sails on the fore yards, clued down, burst from their fastenings, and roared and flapped furiously, defying control. In the meantime, the sea rose rapidly, breaking over and against the ship. At 4 A. M. it had risen to a hurricane gale, and veering to the Northwest; the ship at the same time broke from her course into the trough of the sea; a condition of imminent peril, during which a sea broke in upon the main deck, and drove a great quantity of water into the engine room; a stroke at the heart of life, our machinery.

At 11 o'clock, A. M., a heavy wave

broke over the fore part of the starboard wheel-house, and drove the iron life-boat and the ice-house—of some six or seven tons—furiously against the wheel-house and side of the ship; and before they could be fastened, the careening of the ship sent them sundry times back and forth, threatening instant destruction. Such, and so rapid, were the successions of disaster, that an attempt was made to wear ship, as less perilous than her present condition; but finding her uncontrollable, she was permitted to return to her course; probably our greatest danger escaped.

About noon, a mighty wave struck the starboard wheel-house, and tore up the fastenings of spikes, and iron bands and bolts; throwing off the whole top and outside covering, breaking the under half of the spring beam, and shook to their foundation, and lowered perceptibly, the timbers which sustained the wheel. Thus enfeebling the arm of

our power in the climax of our danger. The wave, with portions of the wreck, rolled deep and dark over the quarter-deck; one of which struck the Captain on the head, while the wave drove him insensible to the stern of the ship, where the network did but barely save him from an ocean grave.

About 1 o'clock, while many were seated in the lower cabin, a sea struck the ship. A tremendous crash was heard on deck, and instantly the cabin was darkened, and torrents of water came pouring down through the sky-lights; all sprang to their feet; and a scream of terror rang through the ship. At this time, the ship pitched and rolled so fearfully, that with no little difficulty we could maintain our position upon our seats, and not a few received bruises and contusions, notwithstanding their efforts.

In these circumstances, you remember, a proposition was made, and accept-

ed, I believe, by all who could attend, to meet in the lower cabin for prayer. It was prayer, not in words and forms merely, but the importunity of the heart; crushed by perils from which it could not escape, and pressed by the complex interests of time and eternity; looking up to the only power in the universe that could save. Subsequently to this meeting, in the evening, Dr. Balch concluded to administer the sacramental communion in his own room, for his own, and the consolation of a few friends; but his purpose becoming known, the number who desired to unite so increased, that the service was administered in the cabin. Having no knowledge of the change of place, myself and some others of my ministerial brethren were not present. In the mean time the storm raged on; but from the time of our public supplications, the desolations ceased.

We had hoped, the preceding night,

that the morning would bring a change; and in the morning, that noon would witness a favourable crisis; and at noon, the evening would realise our hopes. But the storm travelled on, from morning to noon, and from noon to evening, with augmented power, till it became evident that we must encounter the terrors of another night; and though our hopes of deliverance were not utterly extinguished, my own, and the general opinion was, that the ship would not ride out the storm of another night. Not that she would founder intact, amid any winds or waves the Atlantic would bring upon her; but that, smitten by their relentless powers, she would be torn, and crushed, and sunk. And now, while prayer unceasing went up to God, I have cause to know that, on the part of numbers, immediate preparations for eternity commenced, in the rapid retrospect of the past, the circumspection of the present, and the anticipations of

the future ; and not a few, I trust, with calm resignation and peace that passeth knowledge, and joy unspeakable, were prepared to meet their God.

And now the dreaded night came on, in darkness visible and terrible convulsions. It was long and dreadful. On my pillow, without sleep, as I had done the night preceding, I watched it, and learned thoroughly the chart of the ship's, and winds' and waves' motion.

It commenced with a long, slow, roll of the ship, to and fro, almost from beam's end to beam's end, thrice repeated. Then ensued a momentary quiet and onward motion of the ship, and then suddenly the thunder of winds and waves began, loud and louder, and more powerful and rending, as if every portion of our ship would be torn in fragments and scattered upon the deep. Then gradually the thunderings ceased, as if the elements, wearied and breathless by their joint efforts, had paused to

rest and gain breath for another assault. This dreadful rotation continued till between three and four o'clock, when all at once the one thunder seemed to burst into many thunders of equal power, and without intermission roared and tossed and tore, as if the conspiracy of winds and waves were rallying all their forces, and making their last effort to destroy us. But gradually it subsided, only to give place, about five o'clock, to a squall more terrible. In the language of an intelligent passenger, "It struck the ship suddenly, a perfect tornado. She careened over, and buried her gunwales in the ocean; her wheel-house, covered by the waves, that helped the wind to lay her on her side. There she lay for a few moments, stricken powerless, at the mercy of the waves. At this critical moment, when another wave might have finished her, the engine was true to her duty, and round and round thundered her iron wings; when gradually

recovering her upright position, the good ship quartering to the sea, came up to her course." This condition of the ship in the deep gulf, on her beams' ends almost, and covered with waves, was seen by another, who, witnessing her hesitation and trembling for so long a time in her deplorable condition, concluded that she would never rise. And the same deep careening was felt by another, who started up, thinking that all was over and the ship sinking in the waves of the sea.

And now, at last, when the wind veered to the North, and the clouds were lifted up, and the morning light shone brighter upon us, and we thought all danger past, the real danger of the ship, in the lulling of the wind, travelling over such mountains and valleys of water, was scarcely diminished; perhaps even augmented. I stood at this time upon the quarter-deck, and beheld the expanse to the horizon around, filled

with mountains of water with crested top, tossing and raging in all directions. On one of these waves our noble ship rose gracefully to the top, whence I looked down to the deep gulf of waters below; and another wave, tall as the one I rode upon, rushing onward to meet the ship as she descended; and the ship, like an arrow, dropping down to meet the wave; they met; she paused, trembled, and rose, and passed over. Three such waves, in rapid succession, our Captain saw approach the ship, in such direction as extinguished hope, and made him think her escape impossible; each of which unexpectedly broke near the ship and passed harmlessly away.

Such are the evidences of our peril. Let us now survey the evidence, that God, in answer to prayer, interposed to protect and deliver us.

By God, I mean not eternal, material, unthinking nature, of complex causations

and indications of design, without a Designer; nor the mechanism of nature's laws; the offspring of a Divine intelligence, and the sole executors of all the eternal counsels of his will, in his natural and in his glorious mediatorial moral government; a stupendous complex machine; one, on whose movements depend the physical events and moral histories of time; whose pendulum, six thousand years ago, with cold heart and icy hand, he swung and turned his back upon our world, and has not entered it, and will not, till it has prepared, by its own motions, his work for the Day of Judgment.

There are no laws of nature, whose unwatched onward movement could administer the rewards and punishments, and discipline and promised protections, in answer to prayer, of the remedial government of God. Left to themselves, they move on without reference to the character and deeds of

men, and the exigencies of a reforming government in the hand of the Mediator. They are uniform in all their attributes and results, and must be, to answer the permanent and uniform ends of their agency; and can, by no power of their own, accomplish these steady results, and veer about continually to meet the ever-changing exigencies of a moral providence, to meet the continual fluctuations of human character, no more than the battery, chained down to one direction, can send protection or death to all points of the horizon, and the infinite variable exigencies of good or evil within its circumference; no more than an army can stand still and run at the same time, or march at the same time upon a straight and an infinitely crooked line.

And yet, in the hand of God, they have a work to perform, which he can employ them to do, without so innovating upon their uniformity, as to abolish

science and experience, and the calculations of life.

Some of these laws, men, in a limited sphere, can modify and apply to wise and useful purposes, without innovating upon their general unmodified order: as in agriculture and chemistry; and mock storms, volcanoes, and earthquakes; and cannot the God of storms and earthquakes do the same? Once, for a thousand years, he did control the Laws of Nature, in many respects, aside from their native course, in good and evil, according to its character and deeds, in maintaining or abandoning his institutions and worship. Thus corroborating, by the sanctions of time, the motives of Eternity, in maintaining his worship against the encroachments of Idolatry.

He sent the plagues of Egypt to deliver them; gave them bread from Heaven, and water and meat in the barren wilderness. Once in seven years their land lay fallow, and the year

preceding produced the results of two harvests; and peace and war, and rain and drought, and abundance and famine, and sickness and health, and captivity or safety, were the varying and embodied allotments of their history, as they obeyed or disobeyed the laws and institutions of heaven. Now, I should be glad to know, where those laws of nature were, all this time; which are never reached by prayer, or touched by the hand of Omnipotence; and yet dodged about in endless mazes, to meet the ever-varying exigencies of a nation, for a thousand years, according to its character and deeds.

How can prayer be answered by nature's laws, when it is the single, onward, overpowering movement of nature's laws which creates our distress, and nature has no ears to hear, and no mechanism to let on or let off the pressure as our exigencies demand? O God, it is thou that ridest on the whirlwind

and directest the storm. So in the hurricane we understood the matter, and went directly to him, who on earth walked upon the waves and stilled the tempest, and brought his disciples to land. And with infinite benignity he heard our prayer, and comforted our troubled heart, and delivered us.

By what law of wind or wave could our ship have held on her course for 36 hours, through raging winds, and over mountain waves and deep valleys, every moment changing their relation to the ship and her course, and environing her with the network of Death; any one of which, had it struck her in one of the thousand ways it might, was sufficient to whelm her in the deep?

Where now was the mechanism of nature's laws to save us; and who but God, by his providential control of them, could have opened a way for the ransomed of the Lord to pass? What mechanism of nature's laws stopped the

wreck and desolation, which for half a day and more, had been multiplying upon us, from the time of our prayer meeting, though the storm raged on for 24 hours longer, with greater power and peril than before? Who saved us, when the wind had knocked down our good ship, and the wave had buried her gunwales and wheel-house, and she struggled, and trembled, and groaned through all her timbers, but could not rise? And who stopped the lion mouth of three successive waves, that rushed upon us, and broke and passed harmlessly away? which produced the exclamation of our Captain, "Surely there is a power above which is working for us."

And now, rescued from danger and death, by the merciful God to whom we cried in our distress; what shall we render unto him, each one of us, for this his merciful deliverance? Shall it be mere gladness that we have escaped, without gratitude to God? Shall it be

the quick oblivion of our distress, and confessions of sin, and resolutions of reformation, and prayers and promises, if God would hear us? Shall the World, its pleasures, business, and love, annihilated in the light of Eternity, return to its strength; and, like the waves we have passed, roll over us, and sweep us away? Have any of you, till now, neglected known duties; will you not from this time resume them? Have you lived habitually, in habitual and known sins; and will you not break them off? I beseech you to do so, by the mercies of God, and the terrors of that day, if you persist, when death will come indeed, and you will then cry, and God will not answer.

Has God, by the trumpet-tongue of wind and wave, preached a sermon to your inmost soul, and swept away the cobweb sophistries of your scepticism? Be honest then, and fear God, and not the sneer of fools; lest, if you relapse,

he send upon you strong delusions, that you may be damned, because you have no pleasure in the truth ; but have pleasure in unrighteousness. Has he opened the eyes of any of you, the children of Christian parents, to see your sin and danger ; and broken up, for a time, your habits of procrastination ? How shall you escape if you neglect now so great salvation ? Think what your condition was when the storm commenced ; a poor hardened, stupid, procrastinating sinner. Think what, a few days ago, you would have promised and given, to be as safe as you now are. And think what convictions of sin the Spirit of God has wrought on you, by means of the storm. And will you now quench the spirit, and go back to stupidity and folly ? Alas, my friends, if you do so, the Spirit of God may give you up forever. If you do so, the day may come, when fears and terrors, surpassing those of the storm, will come upon you in desolation ;

and when you will again call on God, but he will not answer; and will earnestly seek him, but he will not be found. Now then, is God's time and yours, to seek and secure the salvation of your souls. To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

In anticipation of the hour which might sink us together in a watery grave, I had considered what I should say to impenitent sinners like you, when in the jaws of death you should with loud voices cry to me, "What, what must we do?" and my answer prepared was, Believe instantly on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved; love him, confide in him, and commit your soul to him; and, spite of the strife of elements and a terrific sudden death, you shall be saved; and what I would have said in such an exigency, I now repeat. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.

Have any of you who are professing

Christians, been living in a cold, formal state, conformed to the world in its temper, fashions, amusements, pleasures and business; and have you confessed before God and bewailed these sins, and promised reformation, and found the tokens of pardon in the Love of Christ, shed abroad in your souls; go your way then, in grateful love and steadfast obedience, lest, if you now fall away, a worse thing come upon you.

And now let me inquire of my own heart, and of you, my beloved brethren in the ministry, what shall we render to the Lord, and how shall we fill up the measure of our new chartered time? I felt, as a father, the sudden, unlooked for parting with all my children, so long interwoven with every fibre of my heart; and I prayed to the Lord that I might see them again. But, as a minister of Christ, I prayed more fervently to be spared, to do a few more things, which

I had projected, for his service and glory. And I go home, resolved to postpone the work no longer, but with double diligence to attempt its completion.

And may it not be well that each of us, by such reminiscences of past neglect, be quickened to redeem the time by double diligence; to clear off the docket of duties neglected, and to fill the remaining page of life with the things which ought to be done? And especially, shall we not give ourselves to prayer for those that sail with us in this ship, that God would begin and consummate a work of grace by his Spirit among them? There has been much prayer already, I trust, for this purpose; and the solemnities of the scenes through which we have passed, have aroused attention and armed conscience with a new power; and produced a new tenderness of mind and of good resolutions; a happy preparation

to be consummated by the Spirit in answer to prayer. And shall we not in our general vocation, walk more by faith in things not seen, and less by sight and the influences of time? Be swayed less by ambition and the praise of men; and less by the pleasures of sense, or intellect and taste; and less by things useful, which appertain to the outworks of religion; and more to our direct preaching and pastoral labours, for the conversion of sinners and the augmentation of holiness in the Church of God?

With such a mainspring in the hearts, and preaching of God's ministry, revivals will multiply, and the harvest of the world will be planted and reaped; while without, all will be but a splendid formal machinery of unholiness, while the whole world lieth in wickedness, and the battle goes against the Church, and the glorious things spoken concerning Zion are deferred.

Oh, my brethren, what is the itching

ear of mortals and the praise of men for brilliant classical sermons and splendid eloquence, which amuses the ear as a pleasant song, or skilful music upon an instrument; but which awakens not the conscience, and pricks not the heart, and does not regenerate the soul by the power of the Spirit, and fit it for Heaven. God grant that by this storm we may all be made more spiritual, more prayerful, more faithful, and more successful and happy, in winning souls to Christ!

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

THE JUST GROUND

OF

CONFIDENCE, LOVE AND GRATITUDE.

A Discourse;

BY THE REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D.D.

Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.—PSALM cvii., 21, 22, 32.

As it regards the occasion on which this Psalm was written, we have no information. Indeed, it would seem to have been designed for all occasions, and to refer to no particular event. Its illustrations are drawn from the general

course of Divine Providence, and addressing themselves to men in "whatsoever state they are," it teaches them therewith to be content, and therein to recognize, and seek, the divine guidance and blessing.

The nature and object of the Psalm is, however, very apparent. "Eternal mercy is the theme here proposed; and they who have tasted its sweets are invited to join in setting forth its praises." As the preceding Psalms alluded to God's dealings with Israel, this refers to His general superintendence of the material world, and his special care of mankind in general. And the admiring praise, confidence, and affection of all his creatures are shown to be imperatively binding, since all are the recipients of His kindness and compassion, and the objects of his watchfulness and interposing mercy.

There are three truths of great and practical importance, which are here

forcibly impressed upon us, and to which we will briefly advert.

I. And in the first place, it is here very distinctly taught that all the laws of nature, by which the physical and material world are governed, are under the direct and immediate control of God, and are made to work out the accomplishment of His plans. It does not appear to have been the purpose of God so to order these laws as to secure in this world, and as *it* regards the things of this life, a perfect distribution of rewards and punishments adapted to the various character of individual men. On the contrary, while the events that befall us here are sufficient to prove that on the whole, and in the ultimate result, virtue leads to happiness, and vice to misery, and that there is a moral Governor who has founded this distinction between right and wrong on the immutable and eternal principles of His own divine nature; nevertheless it has ever

been observed by all classes and conditions of men, that the distribution of temporal blessings is characterized by great uncertainty and frequent variations. Virtue is not always prosperous, nor vice always disastrous. On the contrary, outward wealth, honour, and happiness, frequently strew their flowers along the path, and weave their garlands around the brow, of the atheist, the infidel, and the ungodly; while the meek and humble servant of the Lord is allowed to feel, as he urges on his weary way through sickness, poverty, and humiliation, that

> The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
> Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.

The observation of this inequality and uncertainty of Divine Providence has led in every country and age to the most bitter lamentation and complaint, and in many cases to utter scepticism and disbelief in any God, providence, or holiness.

Now that such is the character of the present dispensation, neither experience nor revelation permit us to doubt. "Death," as the type and index of all earthly calamity, "has passed upon all men;" and as it regards affliction, disease, distress and misery, "one thing happeneth alike to all." Inward character is not measured by outward station, nor our standing in the estimate of God by our reputation among men. We are not permitted to expect our recompense and reward in the good things of this life, nor to judge of the nature of our future inheritance by that of the frail tabernacle and poor condition in which we are here permitted to pass "the days of the years of our pilgrimage." "The days of darkness," "the bitterness of the heart," must come upon us all, and from this fierce warfare of contending evil, "there is no discharge."

And here it is, brethren, that Revelation comes in to irradiate the dark-

ness which must otherwise envelope human life and destiny, and to relieve our minds from that fatality and atheistic rejection of all belief in God or his providence, into which they would be otherwise inevitably plunged. We see in the confessions of the Psalmist (Psal. lxxiii), the state of mind to which, but for this blessed volume, we would all be brought; and the hopeless misery which would crush and weigh down our hearts. And it is only when, like him, we come forth into the sunlight of divine truth, that "the eyes of our understanding," are enabled to take a comprehensive view of the whole scheme of the divine government, and that, looking at the end as well as the beginning, the future as well as the present, and the spiritual as well as the physical, we can

> Justify eternal Providence,
> And vindicate the ways of God to men.

In the light of immortality, and of a future judgment, when we shall all be

awarded "according to the deeds done in our bodies, whether they have been good, or whether they have been evil," and receive "glory, honour, and immortality," or "shame, and everlasting contempt," we can at once perceive the wisdom of that economy which, while it gives assurance that virtue is the only pledge of security, and vice the sure prelude to destruction, leaves room for the exercise of faith and patience, and trusting confidence, and hopeful anticipation;—makes manifest the true principles of the heart;—weans the soul from earth, and elevates it to heavenly aspirations;—and makes God's people "willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord," in that mansion where sin, sickness, sorrow, and trial will never come.

But while Scripture warrants the conclusion of experience, that piety is not adequately rewarded by temporal benefits, and that the ungodly, like Dives,

are often permitted through a long life of prosperity, to enjoy their "good things," it is at the same time very positive in ascribing the whole government and direction of all physical phenomena, as well as of all human events, to God's overruling providence. "In His hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. He forms the light, and he creates darkness. He makes peace, and creates evil; I the Lord," says he, "do all these things." "The Lord maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters. He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. He severeth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud." (Job. xii. 10. Is. xlv. 7. Dan. v. 23. Isaiah xliii. 6, 7; and Job. xxvi. 12.)

Such, however, my brethren, is *not* the view commonly received. Not only

among philosophers, but even among many nominal Christians, the opinion prevails that God sits removed from all direct and personal interest in his works, and leaves them to the silent and undisturbed operation of those laws by which they are controlled. "And they say, how doth God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High?" (Psalm lxxiii. 11.) These are the scoffers who say, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Peter, iii. 3, 4.) "And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness." (Hos. cvii. 2.)

To all such reasonings, however, Scripture opposes its positive affirmations, its clear and unquestionable promises, and its innumerable proofs, derived from the incontestible history of individuals and communities. It teaches us that the laws of nature are only the purposes of the

Law-giver, and derive all their potency from the power, the wisdom, and the will, of God. It teaches us that these laws are subservient to God's plans, and not independent of Him. It teaches us that while God governs by these laws, He works, also *through them,* the full accomplishment of all "the good pleasure of His will." And it teaches us that while God upholds these laws in order to afford, in their constancy, a foundation for foresight, industry and toil, and is therefore long-suffering and kind "to the just and the unjust," that, nevertheless, He "is not slack concerning his promises," and that "the day of the Lord" in which wisdom will be justified and wickedness condemned, "will come," and will not tarry. And it teaches us that while nature moves forward in her undisturbed harmony, leaving her processes to carry life or death, peace or distraction, health or sickness, to those who come under their influence, God sits like a

governor at the helm of universal nature, and "makes everything to work together for the good" of them that trust in Him, for the security and triumph of his Church, and for the punishment and overthrow of evil-doers.

Such is the undoubted teaching of this sublime Psalm. All things are here represented as under the immediate and direct control of God, whose ministers and servants they are. The material elements obey his voice and do his will. The mighty ocean, with its world of waters and its irresistible billows, rises or falls, rages or becomes appeased, wages destruction or wafts in comfort and in security, according to the fiat of His omnipotent will. (Ps. cvii. 23–30.) Even the inanimate materials of this solid earth become, through His power, animate with life, are covered with fertility and verdure, and bring forth the kindly herb and all the various "fruits of increase," or are turned into

a wilderness and barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." (Ps. cvii. 33–35.) The cattle also, and the various tribes of lower animals, are the Lord's;—receive their food at His hands;—and are made to further the comfort and happiness of man. (Psalm cvii. 38.) In a still more eminent degree are the persons of men under the wise governance of our Heavenly Father, so that life and death, health and sickness, prosperity and adversity, deliverance and endurance, and even the place of their habitation, are all chosen, and directed, and overruled by God. (Psalm cvii. 9, 10–13, 14, 18, 19.) Life is thus a pilgrimage through a wilderness of cares, in which God is our guide, and under all of which He is our support, and "a very present help in time of trouble." But this is not all. For not only is this overruling providence of God represented as extending to individual persons, and to all that can concern man's bodily

or spiritual wants, but to comprehend also, in its wide and universal dominion, all the societies and nations of the earth. National calamities it declares to be divine judgments, and national prosperity a divine blessing; and while the very loftiest of earthly potentates are described as not exempt from God's authority and control, we are assured that the very meanest and lowest of mankind are not excluded from a participation in His loving-kindness and tender mercy. (Psalm cvii. 34, 39, 35–38, 40, 41.)

II. But we are here taught, in the second place, that in this exercise of His universal and particular providence, God displays the *moral* as well as the *natural* attributes of his being, and demonstrates in a pre-eminent manner that his "tender mercy is over all his other works."

We are not to imagine that God's providence is synonymous with the laws He has attached to the works of his hands. God's overruling guidance of

the laws of the physical, intellectual and moral world does not *constitute* these laws, or make them what they are. It implies necessarily their existence, and affirms only that *as already in operation* they are guided and controlled. It is true that these laws are from God, "by whom all things consist," but still they are from Him not as the God of providence, but as the God of creation. The nature of these laws, their necessity, their wisdom, and their adaptation, *on the whole*, to promote the safety, security and comfort of mankind, might be shown, as it has often been, from a consideration of the constitution of the world, and the relation of its several parts to man and to one another. It is, indeed, too evident to admit of question, that the natural, necessary, and ordinary working of the laws of nature, is the preservation of order, stability, security and safety, and that all the evils that arise are only incidental to the accom-

plishment of permanent and general benefit. But still this is not the question involved in the consideration of the divine providence. The consideration suggested by this doctrine is—are these laws left to work out their *involuntary* results by the undisturbed force of mechanical necessity, or are they overruled by that same wisdom which first imposed them; are they controlled by that same power which still sustains them; and are they made to illustrate the goodness and mercy of that great and gracious Being who first brought into being this habitable globe? Now that they are, is what is here affirmed. It is here taught that these laws *are* thus guided, and that we are not the helpless victims of involuntary and invincible laws, and the blind slaves of a system of heartless fatalism, but that we are subjects of a moral government, and under laws which are overruled by infinite wisdom and infinite goodness.

This goodness of God, as well as his other moral attributes—such as his justice and his truth—are made apparent even in the calamities which are permitted to befal us, as well as in the mercies with which we are "encompassed round about." Goodness will itself require the exercise of that moral discipline which is necessary to perfect moral character; the punishment of evil and of evil-doers; and whatever else is needful to make men awake to the consideration of their present condition, and their future destiny, and thus lead them to secure their best temporal and eternal interests. Now this is just the end aimed at, and the good accomplished by those manifold trials of various kinds through which we are here called to pass, and by which we learn that "verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth, and that verily there is a reward for the righteous." And it is when they see in all these events the purpose of

God towards his people, and his vengeance towards his enemies, that "the righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

But if this is true even of the calamities and distresses of life; if even in these we behold the goodness as well as the severity of the Lord; how much more is it the case as it regards all those innumerable acts of loving-kindness and tender mercy with which God crowns his people, and which he makes to "follow them all the days of their life."

III. We are therefore led to the third lesson which is here so pointedly enforced, that the providence of God lays the foundation for love and confidence, and demands our gratitude and reliance.

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

"And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

"Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders."

This doctrine is the foundation for prayer. Prayer is the supplication of that help and assistance from God which we cannot derive from any resources of our own, or from any created arm. It implies, therefore, and presupposes the possibility of His interference—not to alter and destroy, but to overrule and guide—those laws from which we anticipate evil, and which He alone can "make to work together for our good."

This doctrine encourages us to effort both as it regards temporal and spiritual good. We work with all our might, because we look for heavenly blessing; and we "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God

who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

This doctrine also sustains us under difficulty. We are cast down, but not in despair. When we are weak then we are strong. And when we feel most deeply that in ourselves we are nothing, we are then able to do all things through Him who fills us with "all might in the inner man." Yea, with this doctrine in our hearts, what can harm us, or who can be against us? No evil can befall us but what God "will enable us to bear, and with every trial He will make a way of escape." Even in death we need not despair, nor "fear any evil when we enter into the dark valley" of death's fearful shadow. Even there His rod and his staff shall comfort us. Darkness will become light, and despair triumph, and in the fulness of joy we shall exclaim, "O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?"

It is apparent, therefore, that where

there is right feeling, and a right state and disposition of the heart, God's guidance will be acknowledged in the events and the direction of our lives, and His condescending goodness in all the mercies and deliverances with which he has vouchsafed to bless us. Nothing is more apparent than this truth in all the records of the Bible, and especially in the overflowings of the heart of God's believing people as exhibited in this book of Psalms.

Of this feeling, in connexion with this very subject, I had a recent and most powerful illustration, which at once suggested, and led to the immediate preparation of this discourse, while on board the Great Western Steamer during her recent voyage. We left Liverpool on September 12th, with about 130 passengers on board, amid the congratulations of a numerous throng of spectators and friends ; with a smooth sea and a favouring breeze ; and full of hope

and buoyant anticipation of a speedy voyage and a happy reunion with our families and friends. For eight days our voyage was unusually peaceful and prosperous ; but like Israel, in our prosperity we forgat God, and failed to recognise His hand, and to recount His mercies. For while we had two services on the Sabbath, we had no daily service of praise and prayer, although, as it subsequently appeared, there was on board a large number of professors of religion, and but few despisers of it.*

* Probably a *disposition* to have such a service (which was generally attended by nearly all the passengers during the remainder of the voyage) was repressed by a doubt whether its observance would be in accordance with the rules of the ship, especially as many of the passengers had knowledge of the harsh and illiberal policy enforced on board the Cunard line of steamboats, in one of which, I am informed, a petition of a large number of passengers to be allowed to hear a very distinguished preacher was refused, and that, too, when no other minister officiated.

On Saturday evening, (September 20th), we were overtaken by a gale blowing from the S. W. Probably not a passenger on board slept during the night. Indeed, every thing was in commotion, both below and upon the decks. Whatever was moveable was heaving to and fro ; and while the howling of the winds, as they swept by the masts and cordage, the breaking of timbers, the shattering and flapping of the shivered sails, and the rattling of chains, chairs, furniture, and utensils, filled the mind with "a fearful looking for of" impending destruction ; all the strength of the passengers was necessary t oprevent themselves from being hurled from their places of repose. The morning brought with it a *realization* of these midnight fears. All was confusion and alarm. But little provision could be prepared, and that little could with difficulty be received. The lights

over the cabins had been broken by the force of the waves, which were now sweeping over the vessel in all directions, so that every place was wet and comfortless. It was, indeed, almost impossible to make a passage from the forward cabin to the principal saloon. The wind—which shifted about 20 points during the gale—had roused so many cross seas, and seas of such stupendous size and irresistible fury, that although we were lying to, with the helm hard-lashed, and avoiding as much as possible the approach of the waves towards the sides of the vessel, they were nevertheless driving against her with increasing number and incalculable power. Many of them, it was computed, could not have combined less than fifty tons of water, which was impelled with the momentum of an avalanche. The vessel, too, was enveloped in an atmosphere of spray, so that none but the hardiest

seamen could venture on the deck, and frequently even these could only secure their footing by the help of some firm fixture.

About mid-day, after repeated floodings of the cabin, a huge wave struck the vessel at midships; tore away the whole covering and protection of the paddle-wheel, and bent the wheel itself; swept from its firm foundation, and split into two pieces, the entire house devoted to the keeping of provisions; tore from its fastenings the immense iron life-boat which hung over the middle of the ship, and almost carried it overboard; ripped up a part of the deck with the funnel guard of the machinery; carried away the guards to the deck stairways; and then poured its vast contents over the upper deck, sweeping with it the captain, who had been stunned by a blow from the broken timbers, and was preserved only by the iron

guards, and then burst from their firm stancheons the boats fastened to the ship's side I was looking upwards from the saloon when this wave rolled over us, after making every one reel and stagger under its shock like a drunken man. It almost obscured the light of day, and I felt that we were actually within the bosom of the deep. Soon, however, it appeared as if we should be completely submerged in water, for the impetuous torrent forced its way down the cabin-stairs, and filling its broad gangway, forced a passage through the window into the ladies' saloon, and from thence poured along the cabins. Fearful was that moment which—as we felt the vessel through all her timbers tremble under the dreadful stroke—brought the sad and awful prospect of a speedy and inevitable destruction, in terrible reality before every mind. Then the most unyielding hearts shrunk, and the most hardened became soft and tender, while

those who were most skilled in nautical affairs, and most experienced in sea-faring life, were most anxious and apprehensive for the future. Indeed, our captain, and another who had made some hundred voyages in some twenty different vessels, had never seen so fierce a hurricane, of such long and therefore aggravating force.

At this moment the captain was seen retiring to his cabin to recover from his shock and the violence of the blow he had received, and from beneath the curtain was observed standing with clasped hands and tearful eye before the portrait of his wife and child, whom, as he *afterwards** confessed, he never expect-

* It must not be thought that the captain manifested any signs of fear, or in any way encouraged despondency or fostered despair. His conduct on this occasion was in the *supposed secresy* of his own private cabin, and gave proof of genuine tenderness of heart and of true *manhood;* while his immediate return to duty and exposure, and his undisturbed calmness and courage proved him to be wor-

ed to see again in the flesh, since he looked for a repetition of such shocks, and the consequent ruin of the vessel, whose deck timbers had already manifested signs of being shaken. It was, therefore, with emotions of peculiar solemnity the passengers constituted a meeting for prayer, and cast their helpless souls upon the mercy of that only Being who could hold in His hands the winds and the waves, say unto them, "thus far shalt thou go," and command them to be at peace. And as the evening brought no cessation of the storm, it was proposed, in addition to prayer, to administer the communion to such as were prepared to receive it. Never had I witnessed such a scene, and never could I have realized its solemnity. About seventy sat around the tables, and about eight of them, after conversa-

thy of the high and responsible situation he occupies with so much honour to the Directors, and so much gratification to all his passengers.

tion with the minister, for the first time, and there, in silent reverence, avouched their faith in the Redeemer, their confidence in His blood and merits, and their hope for death, judgment and eternity, through His interceding love and mercy. The effect was most happy. A calm and delightful repose seemed to take the place of anxious solicitude, and we all sought some situation where we might await the issues of another night.

New terrors awaited us during that eventful night. The winds had gathered fresh force, and the waves intenser violence. Instead of being driven before the fury of a pursuing enemy too powerful for resistance, we were exposed to the rage and clamour of contending hosts, and shattered by that very violence with which they dashed one against another. The fiercest winds of heaven exhausted their vengeance on the deep, and the deep aroused its angry billows, with which it mount-

ed up to heaven to repel and drive back its dread assailant. And as the hurricane wheeled about to make its onset from some new quarter, the waves dashed one against another, and, worked up into ungovernable rage, poured their united force in all directions, against the invisible foe. In the midst of these assailants, thus encountering one another, we lay helpless and hopeless. We mounted up to heaven, and then descended into the depths ; were now carried upwards as if to sink stern foremost into the abyss, and again rolled upon our beam-ends as if about to be overturned, and cast forth into the bowels of the deep.

There we lay, with as little power to resist or escape, as when the avalanche has loosened itself from its hold, and pours down its mountain mass upon the helpless villagers below.

For thirty-six hours we had hung balanced between life and death, with the

weight that pressed the scales of death downward increasing momently, and the hopes that still preserved the downward tendency of the scale of life becoming fainter and fainter. But while the gates of death were opened to receive us, He who has the keys of death and hell in his hands, delivered us from going down to the pit, and rescued us from the very jaws of destruction which were wide opened to engulf us. The winds obeyed his voice, and retired to their secret chambers. The waves heard his command, and shrunk within their appointed bounds ; and that ocean which seemed to have been aroused to a ceaseless agitation, gave evidence of approaching rest.

"The waters saw thee, O God ; the waters saw THEE ; they were afraid ; the depths also were troubled. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven. Thy way was in the seas, and thy path in the great waters." "He divided the

sea, and caused us to pass through ; and he made the waters to" subside. When we cried unto Him in our trouble, he saved us out of our distresses. "At his rebuke the winds and the waves fled, and at the voice of his thunder they hasted away." The noise of their battle was hushed, and the fury of their encounter stayed. All their power against us was nought. We passed through the waters, but they did not overflow us, and through the floods, but they did not get hold upon us. God walked upon the wings of the winds, so that they could not harm us ; and set a bound to the waters, so that they could not overwhelm us. Then were we glad because their fury was quieted, and we were enabled to hope that God would bring us to our desired haven.

The violence of the hurricane having now abated, although still tossed about like a feather in the air, we were found on Tuesday morning, with almost no ex-

ception, in the main saloon, to return solemn thanks to Him whom the winds and the waves had obeyed, and to praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men. And as our service proceeded, and the Rev. Dr. Beecher, in full consonance with the occasion, depicted the dangers we had escaped, and the duties we now owed, and portrayed the still greater dangers of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the duty of at once flying from the wrath to come, every heart was melted, and those who had never prayed before, were bent in humble supplication to the Lord.

It was then proposed that resolutions be adopted expressive of our thankfulness to God ; and that, as a testimonial of our gratitude to Him, and to those brave seamen who had so nobly acted as His instruments, we should raise a contribution, to be divided among the captain, officers, and crew, and also con-

tribute something towards the foundation of an Institution in New-York, to be called The Great Western Institution, for the relief of the Widows and Orphans of those who have perished at sea. The amount collected was, for the former $1000, and about $600 for the latter.

And now, brethren, let the narrative of this event, and the exposition of this subject, lead us all to feel, in view of the past dealings of God towards us as individuals, that love and gratitude which such a review is adapted and intended to inspire.

What a picture, my brethren, was presented by the scene I have attempted to depict! Could an actual portraiture be drawn of the whole event—and could that picture bring to light the emotions and the thoughts of every heart—how sublime and impressive would it be! Could we see that chaos of agitated waters; the vessel, like a

cork, tossed to and fro upon its billows, —the dark misgivings, and fearful apprehensions of every passenger,—the penitence and remorse which, like a dark shadow, covered the remembrance of past sinfulness,—and the anxious alarm with which all looked to Him who was now standing at the door, and of whose throne justice and judgment are the habitation;—how would it fill us also, *even now*, with sympathetic emotions, and correspondent fears. And as we saw those clouds dispersing; the rays of hope breaking through, "like sun-blinks in the storm of death;" the thoughts and hopes of life animating with joy every countenance; that tempest-tossed vessel again become the habitation of peace, and joy, and mutual congratulation;—how would our hearts exult with theirs, and beat high with emotions of gratitude and praise.

Let every imagination, then, create, from this partial statement, such a pic-

ture, and let every heart be filled in its contemplation with such joyful gratulations. And in view of all God's wonderful works to the children of men, and to ourselves in particular, let the goodness of God lead us to repentance,—to faith, and to a humble, hearty, and heartfelt consecration to His service. Let us sacrifice the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing. Let us exalt him in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the assembly of the elders. And let our lives and our efforts, our charity, liberality, and zeal, bear witness to the depth and sincerity of our faith.

We are surrounded by dangers, and in the midst of the most quiet and retired life we are in death. On my outward voyage we were a day and a night in the midst of several hundred icebergs, and at the same time enveloped in a dense fog. In my subsequent journeying, I was thrown with violence

from an open carriage when in full motion. And now, on my return, I have just escaped with my life. But, after all, such events only bring to notice, and make manifest, that danger to which we are all *constantly* exposed; and that providential care to which we are as *constantly* indebted; and while they claim at our hands special remembrance and enlarged thankfulness, they ought only the more sensibly to impress upon our minds the truth that it is in God "we live, and move, and have our being;" that we are only safe in His arms, and under His guidance—and that it is our happiness as much as our duty to live in His sight, and to "cast all our cares on Him who careth for us."

But while God has showered upon us his temporal mercies, He has "COMMENDED His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." This is God's greatest

mercy—His stupendous gift—that tender mercy that is over all his other works. The truth, the sincerity, the depth of our thankfulness, and gratitude, are demonstrated, therefore, by our treatment of the Gospel, and our conduct towards the Saviour. "For we thus judge, that if Christ died for all then were all dead, and that He died for all, that they who live should live not unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again." If, therefore, you "neglect this great salvation," and refuse to hear the voice of this Redeemer, to submit yourselves to His service, and to follow His requirements, then assuredly you will be found among His enemies when "He comes to judge the world in righteousness," and the awful curse will be executed upon you—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha."

Whether you shall die on land or on

sea,—whether you shall live longer or shorter,—and whether your condition shall be prosperous or adverse,—the last day and the last hour will come; death will come; "that judgment which is after death," will come, and you will find yourself amid all the solemn and eventful realities of eternity.

This leads me to remark, in conclusion, that there is one aspect of this event which is more truly fearful than any yet described. It is true, as I have stated, that during the continuance of the hurricane every heart was melted and every conscience busy, and that then none were willing to assume the character or the bold front of hardened infidelity. The voice of blasphemy was hushed,—the words of ribaldry silenced,—the instruments of gambling unopened,—and the bowl of intoxication unquaffed. All were then willing to avow their fears, and open up their hearts, and seek counsel and advice.

But when the storm had ceased, how different was the scene! Some, it is to be feared, may have repented of their repentance, and have grieved for their grief, and have become ashamed at the remembrance of their fears. Some, alas! may thus harden their hearts and stiffen their necks, laugh at their fears, and make a jest of death. Ministers and prayers, and sermons, and devotion, may become their scorn, and their blasphemy, till, like the steel which has been tempered in the fire, their hearts may become harder than ever, and they themselves live only to fill up the measure of their iniquity, and become prepared as vessels fitted for destruction, and as victims salted with fire for everlasting burning.

But even while we thus express our fears, far different are our hopes and our prayers, for God is witness that "our heart's desire and prayer" for all who have been partakers alike of our danger

and our deliverance is, "that they may be saved."

Brethren, let the very possibility of such a dreadful consequence duly impress your minds. Many have been the mercies you have received, and the deliverances you have experienced. And above all other mercies,—to you has the word of God's salvation been sent, and to you has the glorious Gospel of the blessed God been preached. Many are the convictions which, under the striving of the Spirit, you have felt, and the purposes of devotion you have formed. But you may have grown careless with returning ease, and lost those purposes amid the distractions of business and pleasure. And to this hour you may have continued to turn a deaf ear to the warnings of Providence and the invitations of the Gospel, and may therefore be still "without God, and without hope in the world."

But if this is the case, is there no

ground to fear that this Gospel is hid to you because you are lost; that, having hardened your neck against reproof, you will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy; that in due time your feet will slide; and that in such a moment as you think not, the storm of death will arise, the winds of God's vengeance begin to blow, and the waves of perdition to roll, when you will be swept as by the besom of destruction, and swallowed up in the bottomless depths of the ocean of eternity.

"Be ye therefore ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

Wait not *for* God to come to you, but wait *upon* God. Wait not till God call you to repentance, but cry unto Him that he may at once hear, and answer, and bless and save. God in the kingdom of grace, as well as in the kingdom of nature, has established a connection of probability and subordination between

the regular use of means and the desired end. He has appointed means not only for *Himself* to work by, but for *us* to work with. And even as in providence, though God knows and has determined who shall be rich and prosperous, and who not, yet we find the means and end generally connected together, so is it in the business of salvation. "Work out, then, your own salvation with fear and trembling, since it is God who worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And may God grant it to His glory and your salvation, and His shall be all the praise. Amen.